



Environmental News

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EPA and State of Massachusetts Launch Campaign to Boost Commuting Options

BOSTON - Decrying the adverse economic and environmental impacts caused by the region's auto dependency, the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts today launched a "Best Workplaces for Commuters" Campaign to boost commuter ridership on buses, ferry boats, bicycles and other modes of transportation.

Flanked by Massachusetts Environmental Affairs Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder and Massachusetts Transportation Secretary Daniel A. Grabauskas, EPA Regional Administrator Robert W. Varney recognized 33 New England area companies and organizations for the strong commuter benefit packages they offer to 48,000 area workers.

"These organizations are setting the bar in providing real financial incentives to encourage employees to leave their cars at home and commute in ways that reduce traffic congestion and air pollution," Varney said.

But, noting that Massachusetts was hit with 29 'smog alert' days last summer and that traffic congestion costs the Boston-area economy nearly \$1.6 billion a year, Varney said many more employers need to be pushing commuter choice options for workers. "For the sake of the economy and air quality, we've got to get more workers out of their cars and onto buses, boats and bikes," he said.

EPA and the Commonwealth announced a campaign to triple – from 33 to 100 – the number of Commuter Choice Employers in New England by Earth Day 2004. Commuter Choice Employers must offer their employees at least one major commuter benefit such as \$30 per month in transit passes, vanpool subsidies or cash instead of subsidized parking spaces. Additionally, they must offer three other commuter benefits from a list, including carpool matching, bike lockers, compressed work schedules and membership in a transportation management association (TMA).

To better recognize employers that meet these stringent requirements, the name of the program is being changed to "Best Workplaces for Commuters." Employers joining the program will now be designated as one of the "Best Workplaces for Commuters," a seal of approval that employers can use on their shuttle buses, web sites, job ads etc.

"The Romney administration is pleased to be involved with the Best Workplaces for Commuters Campaign as part of our efforts to increase the use of mass transit by commuters," said Massachusetts Transportation Secretary Daniel A. Grabauskas. "Fostering and promoting commuting alternatives not only helps the environment, but also gives people improved access to affordable and efficient modes of

transportation to and from their workplace.”

“No single government agency, organization or company can make the Best Workplaces for Commuters Campaign a success,” added Massachusetts Environmental Affairs Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder. “In the coming year, state environmental agencies will work closely with our federal, business and transport management partners to help reach our shared goal of tripling the number of companies involved in this excellent program.”

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts offers excellent commuter services, including a comprehensive transit system and services of the statewide commuter transportation organization, CARAVAN for Commuters Inc., to more than one million daily commuters. In addition, Massachusetts is one of a handful of states in the country with a statewide ridesharing rule, which requires all large employers to develop and implement a strategy to reduce single occupancy commuting among their employees.

EPA and the Commonwealth will achieve their goal of tripling the number of employers in the Best Workplaces for Commuters Campaign by forming a coalition with leading business, human resource, environmental and transportation associations in New England, meeting with employers across the region, and publicizing a “Best Workplaces for Commuters” list this fall.

This Friday at the state Transportation Building in Boston, companies or organizations interested in setting up a comprehensive commuter benefits package for employees can attend a training workshop, “Developing and Implementing a Commuter Choice Program: Best Practices for Best Results.” The workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For information on attending, please contact Chris Vallancourt at CARAVAN at 617-973-7189

The region’s transportation management associations will be an important partner in this campaign. These organizations work daily with hundreds of New England companies, providing information and services that enable them to provide outstanding commuter benefits that reduce air pollution and traffic congestion.

“The Best Workplaces for Commuters Campaign will help us truly distinguish and recognize those companies with a strong commitment to commuter benefits,” said David Straus, executive director of the Artery Business Committee TMA, and president of the Patriot Chapter of the Association for Commuter Transportation. “We look forward to working with the EPA, DOT and the state along with our members to achieve the goals of this campaign.”

For more info about the program, visit the agency’s web site at www.commuterchoice.gov

The full list of New England’s Commuter Choice Employers follows:

ADD Inc, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts
Alternatives for the Community and the Environment, Roxbury, Massachusetts
Applied Geographics, Boston, Massachusetts
Booz Allen Hamilton, Boston, Massachusetts
Cambridge Systematics, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts
CambridgeSide Galleria, Cambridge, Massachusetts
CARAVAN for Commuters, Inc., Boston, Massachusetts
Charles River Transportation Management Association (TMA), Cambridge, Massachusetts
Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire

Delta Air Lines, East Boston, Massachusetts
EPA New England, Boston, Massachusetts
ERG, Inc., Boston, Massachusetts
Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Hyperion Solutions, Stamford, Connecticut
Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts
MetroPool Inc., Stamford, Connecticut
Millennium Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts
Northeast Sustainable Energy Association, Greenfield, Massachusetts
Novartis, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts
NSTAR, Westwood, Massachusetts
PanAmSat Corporation, Wilton, Connecticut
Pitney Bowes, Inc., Stamford, Connecticut
Purdue Pharma, Stamford, Connecticut
Shriners Burns Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts
Time Warner Cable, Stamford, Connecticut
University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Amherst, Massachusetts
U.S. Department of Energy, Boston Office, Boston, Massachusetts
Verizon Massachusetts, Boston, Massachusetts
Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts
World Trade Center Boston/Seaport Hotel, Boston, Massachusetts
Wyeth BioPharma, Andover, Massachusetts